



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To PRCS - May 29 2012

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: May 3, 2012

From: Vern Jacques
Acting Director, Recreation

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LATER/2012-Vol 01

Re: Richmond Children's Charter

Staff Recommendation

That the Richmond Children First's "Richmond Children's Charter," as presented in the report dated May 3, 2012, from the Acting Director, Recreation, be endorsed.

Vern Jacques
Acting Director, Recreation
(604-247-4930)

Att. 2

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
REVIEWED BY TAG SUBCOMMITTEE	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

Richmond Children's First was initiated in 2004 as an umbrella of community-based youth serving organizations. City staff have participated, with Council support, in Children's First activities since its inception. As part of this initiative staff have participated in a working committee to develop a Richmond Children's Charter.

Richmond Children First has worked with children throughout the City of Richmond to develop a Charter specific to the needs and interests of children in Richmond. The Charter promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which was ratified by Canada in 1991.

Recently, Council received a letter asking that they endorse the Richmond Children's Charter (Attachment 1). This report provides the background and context for how the Richmond Children's Charter fits with the City's initiatives and its vision of being *".... the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada."*

Analysis

Richmond Children First (RCF) is a community initiative that has been active in Richmond since 2004. A list of the RCF Steering Committee members is provided in Attachment 2. Staff from both Community Services and Parks and Recreation represent the City on the Steering Committee, and various staff have participated in RCF Action Teams, including the Children's Charter working committee.

In 2005, Council endorsed the vision for "Richmond to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth." Consistent with this vision the City has pursued many positive initiatives for youth, including the development of the 2008-2012 Youth Service Plan: Where Youth Thrive. As well, the City is a signatory to the Public Agency Partner's Commitment to the Children and Youth of Richmond. This commitment outlines how the public agencies will work together to provide children and youth of Richmond access to:

- Safe places to live, work and play
- A healthy start in life, and a foundation for life
- A supporting, caring community where children and youth feel they belong
- Life long learning opportunities
- Opportunities to reach their full potential

By endorsing the Richmond Children's Charter (Attachment 3), Council could further demonstrate the City's commitment to making Richmond the best place in North America to raise children and youth.

Staff from Parks and Recreation and Community Services will support the Charter within existing programs and services.

Also, Staff are currently preparing the Social Development Strategy which will be presented in draft form to Council in the near future. Once the Strategy is adopted by Council, staff will be developing a work program for its implementation. Consideration will be given to how the Richmond Children's Charter might be integrated into the implementation plan.

Richmond Children First will also be asking other agencies, such as School District No.38, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and Vancouver Coastal Health to endorse the Charter.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The Richmond Children's Charter (Attachment 3) provides a children's lens to building a child and youth friendly City and support the City commitment, *"for Richmond to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth."*



Elizabeth Ayers
Manager, Community Recreation Services
(604-247-4669)



Lesley Sherlock
Social Planner
(604-276-4220)

EA:ea



May 7, 2012

Mayor and Council
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond BC

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of Richmond children we are pleased to present to you, for endorsement, the Richmond Children's Charter (Appendix 1).

Children grow up not only as part of a family, but also as part of a community. Research tells us that early human development – what happens to a child between birth and 12 years old – affects long term health, well-being and competence. Research is also helping us understand how community circumstances can be shaped to improve the lives of children.

Richmond Children First, a community initiative active in Richmond since 2004, is made up of community agencies and public organizations, including the City of Richmond (Appendix 2). Funded by the Province of British Columbia and the United Way of the Lower Mainland, Richmond Children First brings partners together to plan, build and expand capacity in the neighbourhoods and communities where children and families live, grow, play and learn. Richmond Children First activities are based on a strategic plan, developed in collaboration with community partners, which is research-based and builds on the needs of our children and the assets in our community. The vision of Richmond Children First is *a child friendly community where all children thrive*, and one of our main goals is developing a community vision for children.

The City of Richmond is recognized for its strong commitment to children, as evidenced through the many policies and strategies you have initiated and supported, including being a signatory to the Public Agency Partners' Commitment to Children and Youth. This commitment outlines how you will work together with other public partners to ensure that children and youth have:

- Access to safe places to live, work, and play;
- A healthy start in life, and a foundation for life;
- A supporting, caring community where children and youth feel they belong;
- Lifelong learning opportunities;
- And, opportunities to reach their full potential.

Interestingly, Richmond children have echoed these commitments in the creation of the Richmond Children's Charter.

Over the last year, 3000+ Richmond children accepted the invitation to help shape the Richmond Children's Charter through words and drawings:

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- 2500 elementary school children from 45 public and independent schools submitted bookmarks to the annual bookmark contest hosted by Richmond Public Health, depicting the theme, "Every Richmond child has the right to..."
- The voices of 350 preschoolers were included through the creation of 25 Magical Trees of Children's Rights submitted by child care centres, preschools, StrongStart centres and family place programs.
- 150 children attending summer camp programs submitted entries to the Richmond Children's Rights Summer Poster Contest.
- And, 28 children from the Hamilton Out-of-School Program and the Mitchell Boys and Girls Club helped finalize the Richmond Children's Charter through rights activities, community visioning and the creation of the Richmond Children's Charter video.

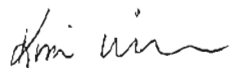
The Richmond Children's Charter promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at a community level, where it can have a significant impact on children's lives.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. This important initiative addresses the rights of all children and states that "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth". The Government of Canada ratified the UNCRC in 1991. These rights are the things that all children should have or be able to do. All the rights are connected to each other and all are equally important. As children grow, they have more responsibility to make choices and exercise these rights.

The Richmond Children's Charter provides a children's lens to building a child-friendly city and can help guide policy decisions, programs and planning as they relate to children, not only for the city but for all organizations who support children.

Your endorsement will be the first step in launching the Richmond Children's Charter in the broader community. We want to assure you that Richmond Children First partners share a collective responsibility for the health and well-being of our children and we are committed to introducing the Richmond Children's Charter with an invitation to organizations and groups to endorse the Charter by making a promise to children. The Children's Charter will be celebrated, communicated through presentations and promotional materials, and we will continue to engage the voices of children so they are actively involved in creating their community's future.

Sincerely,



Kim Winchell
Co-Chair
Richmond Children First



David Phillips
Co-Chair
Richmond Children First

Attach.

Appendix 1: Richmond Children's Charter

Appendix 2: Richmond Children First Steering Committee: Membership

RICHMOND CHILDREN FIRST

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Richmond Children First STEERING COMMITTEE		
1. Big Brothers Vancouver	Melissa Wilson	Assistant Program Director
2. Boys and Girls Club of South Coast BC	Jason Lee	Manager, Clubs and Camp
3. CHIMO Crisis Services	Rebeca Avendano	Director, Development & External Relations
4. City of Richmond	Lesley Sherlock	Social Planner,
5. City of Richmond	Elizabeth Ayers	Manager, Community Recreation
6. Family Services of Greater Vancouver	Kareen Hudson	Manager
7. Ministry for Children & Family Development	David Phillips	Community Services Manager
8. Richmond Addiction Services	Rick Dubras	Executive Director
9. Richmond Family Place	Kim Winchell	Executive Director
10. Richmond Mental Health & Addictions	Mary Jago	Program Manager, Child & Youth Mental Health
11. Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society	Parm Grewal	Executive Director
12. Richmond Public Library	Virginia McCreedy	Youth Librarian
13. Richmond School District	Kathy Champion	Director of Instruction, Learning Services
14. Richmond Society for Community Living	Sue Graf	Director of Children's Services
15. Richmond Youth Service Agency	Marshall Thompson	Executive Director
16. Scouts Canada	Viki Fanous	Council Field Executive
17. SUCCESS	Mary Kam	Director, Family & Youth Services
18. Touchstone Family Association	Judy Valsonis	Director of Operations
19. Vancouver Coastal Health - Richmond	Diane Bissenden	Director, Population & Family Health
20. Child Care Resource and Referral (VRIS)	Marcia MacKenzie	Manager
21. YMCA	Jenny Payton	Manager, Programs and Services

Richmond Children First CHILDREN'S CHARTER ACTION TEAM		
City of Richmond	Elizabeth Ayers	Manager, Community Recreation
Ministry for Children & Family Development	David Phillips	Community Services Manager
Richmond Family Place	Kim Winchell	Executive Director
Richmond School District	Larry Antrim	Coordinator of Counselling & Social Responsibility
Touchstone Family Association	Judy Valsonis	Director of Operations
Vancouver Coastal Health - Richmond	Dr. James Lu	Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health - Richmond	Chris Salgado	Manager, Community and Family Health
Child Care Resource and Referral (VRIS)	Marcia MacKenzie	Manager
YMCA	Jenny Payton	Manager, Programs and Services

May 2012

Richmond Children's Charter

RICHMOND CHILDREN HAVE...

1-The Right To Play

"I have the right to have fun" (David, age 9)

"Playgrounds should have swings, we can be responsible" (Alyssa, age 10)

2-The Right To Learn

"I have the right to learn by making mistakes" (Jessica, age 11)

"We have the right to learn everywhere—in kindergarten, at home, with adults" (Evelyn and Austin, age 4)

3-The Right To Belong and Be Ourselves

"You have the right to special help if you need it – if your eyes don't work you need a looking dog. That is special help." (Fraser, age 5)

"I have the right to look weird." (Jason, age 10)

"Every child has the right to be forgiven." (Angela, age 10)

4-The Right To Be Loved and Have A Family

"I have the right to live in a caring family for a bright future" (Christopher, age 9)

"You have the right to be a kid with your family" (Aidan, age 5)

5-The Right To Nutritious Food and A Healthy Life

"I have the right to eat healthy food so I don't get sick" (Ethan, age 5)

"We have the right to have a family doctor" (Colin, age 10)

6-The Right to a Home

"Every child needs a home." (Hasean, age 10)

"I speak English and Chinese but I only belong to Canada" (Fraser, age 5)



7-The Right to Choose Friends

"I have the rights to have friends from other cultures" (Anell, age 8)

"I love meeting new friends at school. Bonjour!" (Ashley, age 9)

8-The Right to Explore, Dream, Imagine, and Create

"We have the right to dream, achieve, and be free" (Alison, age 9)

"I have the right to read to have a big mind! Reading is awesome." (Amanjit, age 8)

9-The Right to Peace and Safety

"I have the right not to be afraid." (Jimmy, age 8)

"The police protect you - and so do your mommy and daddy - and your teachers" (Fraser & Ilias, age 5)

10-The Right to Be Heard

"I have the right to ask questions and express myself." (Alice, age 11)

"We have the right to share our ideas and be listened to. Ideas are when you think of stuff hard." (Griffin, age 5)

11-The Right to Our Own Religion

"I have the right to pray" (Ali, age 7)

"We have the right to believe in what we need to believe in." (Jake, age 10)

12-The Right to a Clean Environment

"Every child needs clean water, not dirty water" (Cindy, age 9)

"I have the right to help protect the environment." (Keon, age 8)



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Across Richmond, over 3,000 children from the ages of 3 to 12 years old shared, through words and drawings, their opinions on children's rights in Richmond. The Richmond Children's Charter of Rights reflects the top 12 rights identified by Richmond children.